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A Cache of Maud Arrow Points and Other Artifacts from the Jim Clark site, Red River County, Texas

Timothy K. Perttula

INTRODUCTION

In the winter of 2010, I was contacted by Robert Perino, son of the late Greg Perino, a well-known archaeologist who had worked extensively since the late 1960s along the Red River in southwest Arkansas (Perino 1967), southeastern Oklahoma (Perino 1976, 1981), and northeast Texas (Perino 1978, 1979, 1983, 1994, 1995) in the Caddo archaeological area. According to Robert Perino, Greg Perino had found a cache of 30 Maud arrow points at the Jim Clark site in Red River County, Texas, in 1975, and recorded the discovery in a journal, along with a ground stone celt and a ceramic vessel. It is not known with certainty if this cache was associated with a Caddo burial eroding out of the site, but it seems likely that this is the case, as burials are common in Caddo sites along the river in various archaeological contexts, and that these artifacts were all that were either exposed, or remained, of a particular disturbed burial. The purpose of this article is to put these findings on record, in the hope that they provide a measure of useful information for those studying the native history of the Caddo peoples that lived along this section of the Red River before A.D. 1700.

The discovery of the cache has not been previously reported in the Caddo archaeological literature, and the Jim Clark site itself has not been formally recorded. Its exact location was not noted by Greg Perino in his journal, but it is likely that it is along a Red River alluvial terrace or natural levee not far from the Bentsen-Clark site (41RR41) (or perhaps even part of it), as a portion of that Early and Late Caddo period cemetery and village site is on land owned by Jim Clark (Banks and Winters 1975:viii). Other prehistoric Caddo sites in the immediate vicinity of the Bentsen-Clark site that have been recorded include 41RR74 and 41RR75, although whether these sites have Caddo burials, or when they were occupied in the Caddo era, is not known. The Rowland Clark site (41RR77) is only a few miles upstream on the Red River.

ARTIFACTS FROM THE JIM CLARK SITE CACHE

Avery Engraved Vessel

The vessel from the cache at the Jim Clark site is an Avery Engraved compound bowl with four rim peaks (Figure 1). Under each rim peak are prominent strap handles; there is wear visible in the holes from the strap handles, suggesting that the vessel may have been suspended at one time. The vessel, about 15 cm in height, appears to be shell-tempered, based on the appearance of the paste where the core of the vessel is exposed, along with the distinctive pitting and erosion of the exterior vessel surface, often seen on Red River shell-tempered vessels. The color of the vessel's interior and exterior surfaces indicate that it was fired and cooled in a low oxygen or reducing environment, producing a vessel with a dark grayish-brown color on both vessel surfaces and in its core.

The decoration of the upper panel of the compound bowl consists of three widely and evenly-spaced horizontal engraved lines. Interspersed between the lowermost two horizontal lines are a number of small but independent rectilinear to curvilinear elements (perhaps eight in number) that encircle the panel. These elements are each bisected by a single short horizontal engraved line (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Avery Engraved vessel from the Jim Clark site.

The lower panel on the vessel has four sets of semi-circular engraved elements around the vessel, separated by two arcing lines on each side of the design, a single short vertical engraved line, and then demarcated by a single horizontal engraved line at the top and bottom of the panel (see Figure 1). Each set of the semi-circular elements are comprised of three semi-circular engraved lines, the uppermost of which has large excised pendant triangles or “sun rays.”

Arrow points

There are 30 arrow points in the Jim Clark site cache (Figure 2). All are triangular in form, with relatively straight-sided blades, and a generally concave, sometimes deeply so, base. The points were made from several different raw materials—all likely available in Red River gravels that contain raw materials whose ultimate source is the Ouachita Mountains of southeastern Oklahoma (Banks 1990; Banks and Winters 1975), including a black Big Fork chert ($n=5$, 16.7%), white, gray, and heat-treated novaculite ($n=6$, 20%), and various other gray, grayish-brown, brownish-red, and light gray cherts. Based on scrutiny of the arrow point photographs, one or two of the arrow points may be made of a local quartzite (Figure 2: far left row, 2nd from top and far right row, top).

With respect to the arrow point types represented in the cache, I have identified 23 Maud points (77% of the cache sample), four concave to deeply-concave-based side-notched (Maud or Talco variants, see Duncan et al. [2007:132]) points, and three flat-based triangular points, at least two of which may be preforms based on their size in comparison to the complete arrow points (see Figure 2, far right row, top and 4th from the top). Perino (1994:Figure 6a-b) illustrates similar kinds of Maud and side-notched arrow points from the Rowland Clark site, located only a few miles upstream from the Bentsen-Clark site, as do

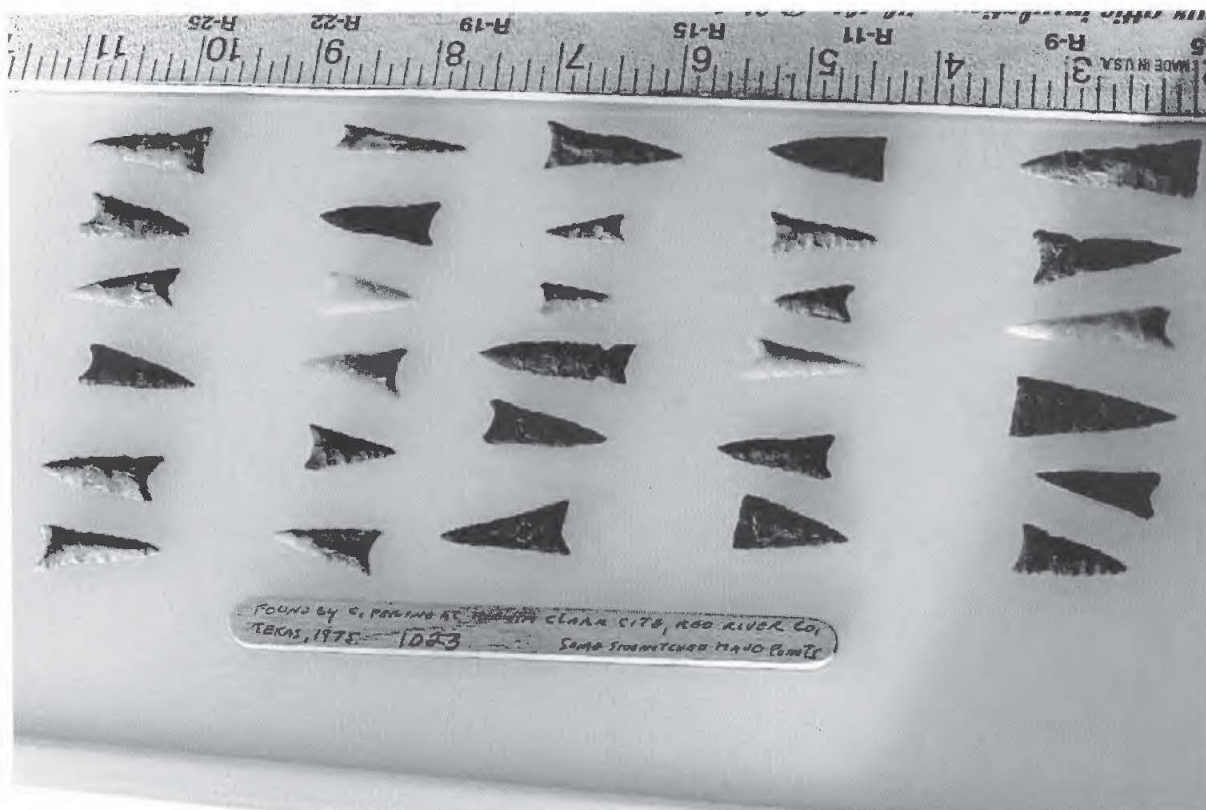


Figure 2. Arrow points from the Jim Clark site cache, Red River County, Texas.

Skinner et al. (1969:Figure 27a-d) and Perttula (2008:Figures 28a-b and 55e-h) from the Sam Kaufman/Roitsch site. Overall, the form and size of the points in the Jim Clark site cache is rather homogeneous, although whether the points are the product of the work of one or more knappers is not known.

Celt

The one celt in a collection appears to have been made of a greenish-gray diorite or siliceous shale that has been pecked and/or polished over its entire surface (Figure 3). It has a tapered poll end and a well-defined convex bit. Similar celt forms have been reported from Late Caddo contexts at the Sam Kaufman/Roitsch (41RR15) and Rowland Clark (41RR77) sites (Skinner et al. 1969:89 and Figure 28d-e; Perino 1994:Figure 4q-r; Perttula 2008:Figure 32). The celt from the cache is an estimated 10 cm in length.

TEMPORAL AND CULTURAL AFFILIATION

The combination of a shell-tempered Avery Engraved vessel and numerous Maud arrow points in the Jim Clark site cache suggests that this find dates to the Late Caddo period (after ca. A.D. 1300-1400), and is likely affiliated with the still poorly defined (e.g., Story 1990:331; Hammerstedt et al. 2010:290) McCurtain phase polity on the middle reaches of the Red River (Bruseh 1998:Figures 3-9 and 3-10). In other parts of Northeast Texas—primarily in Titus phase cemeteries and village areas—the Maud point is considered to have been made and used primarily after ca. A.D. 1500, and that is the general consensus for the temporal use of Maud points in the McCurtain phase. The period from ca. A.D. 1500-1700, when Maud points may have been mainly used, is considered the late McCurtain phase (Perttula 2008:Table 1).



Figure 3. A ground stone celt from the Jim Clark site cache.

As Duncan et al. (2007:83-84) note, “Maud points are considered characteristic of the later McCurtain and Titus phases, late in the Caddoan [sic] chronology along Red River and northeast Texas,” but they also comment that there are few radiocarbon dates available from sites in these phases that can be directly associated with Maud points. However, there are two dated burial features (Burials 15 and 17) at the Sam Kaufman/Roitsch site with radiocarbon dates and numerous arrow point funerary offerings ($n=70$). The calibrated radiocarbon dates from these features, at 1 sigma, range from AD 1412-1513. It is notable that the predominant arrow point is a variety of Scallorn (perhaps Scallorn sattler, see Brown [1996:442 and Figure 2-61q-s]), accounting for almost 83% of the points in these two features (Skinner et al. 1969:81), and there are also two narrow parallel-stemmed arrow points. Only 14% of the arrow points in Burials 15 and 17 are triangular in form and have concave bases, like a classic Maud arrow point in this part of Northeast Texas, but they are all side-notched (Skinner et al. 1969:Figure 27a-b, d). There are no un-notched Maud points in these two burial features.

The absence of un-notched Maud points in these two burial features at the Sam Kaufman/Roitsch site, and the above-mentioned calibrated radiocarbon dates that range from AD 1412-1513 for these two features, suggest un-notched Maud forms did not become common in McCurtain phase contexts until after ca. A.D. 1510 or thereabouts. Furthermore, the absence of Scallorn sattler arrow points in the cache, but the predominance of un-notched Maud arrow points, is the best available circumstantial evidence that the Jim Clark site cache of arrow points, Avery Engraved vessel, and celt, dates after ca. A.D. 1500.

CONCLUSIONS

In 1975, Greg Perino recovered a cache of 30 arrow points (mostly of the Maud type), a ground stone celt, and an Avery Engraved compound bowl at the Jim Clark site on the Red River in Red River County, Texas; the site has never been formally recorded with the state of Texas. Although the exact location of the cache is unknown, the fact that it is presumed to have been found on property owned by Jim Clark allows me to at least venture that the Jim Clark site is near the Bentsen-Clark site (41RR41), since this site occurs partially on his land. The cache may have been associated with the remnants of a prehistoric Caddo burial. The kinds of arrow points and ceramic vessel found in the cache suggests that it dates from after ca. A.D. 1500, and thus it may be associated with the late McCurtain phase (ca. A.D. 1500-1700) settlement of this part of the Red River basin.

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